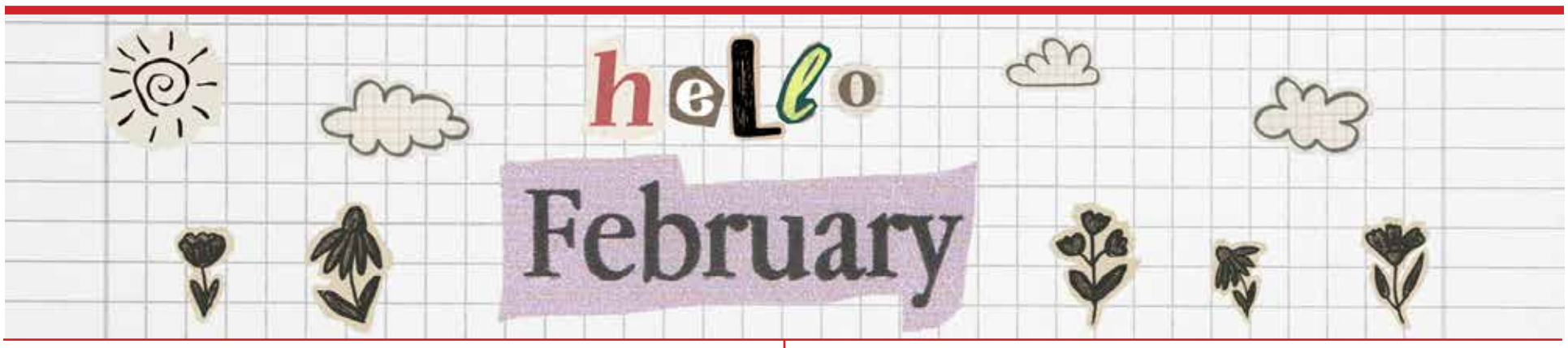
NORTHERN ISLANDER

$5.00

FEBRUARY 2026



CELEBRATING 250 YEARS OF AMERICA

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XOXO

BEAVER ISLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Established 1957
Keeping Island History Alive

NORTHERN ISLANDER

is proudly owned and published by the
Beaver Island Historical Society

Board President	Tracy Paquin
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Hello Readers!

It has been a long, cold winter, but this community has persevered and made the best of these snowy, cold, and windy months.

This February, the Northern Islander team wants to offer a heartfelt thank you to this community. Beaver Island is wonderful for so many reasons, and the people who make up the island are a large part of that beauty.

In honor of Valentine's Day, we asked the community to share messages of love and kindness for the island, its people, and their loved ones. Take a look at some of the beautiful messages from year-rounders, off-islanders, and visitors alike:

"Happy Valentine's Day to Aunt Sherry, Cousin Becca, Cousin Laura, and Cousin Ryder! Thank you for your love! Beaver Island is amazing!! God bless you."

- Sue Henry Netting

"Even when we're apart, we can feel the gift of your peaceful presence, and we breathe easy again. Thanks for always welcoming us back."

- Ed McClellan

"We love the Burtons, the Music Festival, and the beauty of Beaver Island."

- Renee Addison Hibbs

"Our one and only visit to Beaver Island was this past Labor Day weekend for the wedding of the season. We had an amazing time and to see the love from this island pressed on to the bride and groom was wonderful. I hope Courtney and Ron also saw the love. We hope to come back again."

- Thelma Socia

"My housemate and partner in the 'moving to Beaver Island adventure', Howard Kadison, sent me this email about 10 years after we moved here. It was titled 'Home.' He died in 2024.

'Yet when I am in this place, there is love, security, gentleness, and a sense this tiny corner is where I should be.'"

- Audrey VanDyke

"Paradise Bay Coffee Shop loves its customers!"

- Dale Keyes

"Beaver Island, we love your quiet, unspoiled beauty, kind and welcoming people, the fun music festival, and all the amazing things! Also, love the ride on the Beaver Island Ferry!"

- Kim Midlam

And, a message from me, your editor:

I am incredibly grateful to be part of the Northern Islander team, bringing you local news, stories, and history from the Island and beyond.

I truly love what I do. I love playing a hands-on role in gathering the stories we share, working closely with our contributors, and managing the layout of each issue. I take great pride in the Northern Islander as both a newspaper and a piece of community art, something created with care, intention, and heart.

I am endlessly thankful for my team and our wider support network. This paper would not exist without their time, talent, and dedication. From writers and photographers to sponsors and community members who share their stories and photos, every contribution matters.

One of my favorite parts of this role is getting to be among the first to read our contributors' work. Each story is unique and reflective not only of its author, but of the community we all share. I also deeply value the opportunity to interview and collaborate with community members to tell meaningful stories and share local news that connects us.

Most of all, I love Beaver Island. This is the community that raised me, shaped me, and taught me so many lasting lessons about the world and the people in it. Being able to give back to this place through the Northern Islander is both an honor and a privilege. To this wonderful network of people, and to Beaver Island itself, thank you for sharing this journey with me. Please know how deeply I appreciate your trust, your support, and your stories.

Happy Valentine's Day,
Elsie Burton
Editor of the Northern Islander

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NORTHERN ISLANDER

To set up an annual subscription, call the Beaver Island Historical Society at (231) 448-2254

PRINT SHOP PERSPECTIVE

By Lori Taylor-Blitz

Since 1957, The Beaver Island Historical Society has been working to keep Beaver Island History Alive! We advance this goal through a mission of preserving and sharing the unique history of Beaver Island and the Archipelago.

A SEASON OF LOVE, REMEMBRANCE, AND GRATITUDE

February brings Valentine's Day, a time we often associate with cards, hearts, and small gestures of affection. But here on Beaver Island, love has always meant something a little deeper. It is found in the people who raised us, the neighbors who looked out for one another, the friendships that lasted a lifetime, and the memories that continue to shape our community. Valentine's Day offers a gentle reminder to pause and reflect on those connections, especially the ones that endure across generations. At the Beaver Island Historical Society, this season reminds us that history is not just something we display or store. It lives in people, in remembrance, and in the generous acts that honor those we love while helping preserve our shared story.

Over the last 12 months, the Beaver Island Historical Society has been honored to receive the following memorial and honorary gifts. Each was given with care and intention, remembering loved ones or celebrating lives that have helped shape families, friendships, and our Island community. We share these acknowledgments with gratitude and respect, recognizing the trust placed in BIHS to steward both the gifts and the memories they represent.

MEMORIAL GIFTS

- Priscilla Becker, in memory of Raymond C. Becker
- Steve Banhart, in memory of Norman and Peggy Banghart
- Brian Bracey, in memory of Sheldon and Bea Parker
- Tracy Bidwell, in honor of Duane and Mary Bidwell
- Timothy Barrett, in memory of Larry and Ruth Barrett
- Erma Bridges, in memory of Francis and AnnaMarie Ricksgers, Joseph and Bridget Sendenburgh, and Bill and Bridget Ricksgers
- Matt Broder and Susan Neitlich, in memory of Ann Broder and Helen Collar
- Dale Chilton, in memory of Jude Martin
- Janet Creed, in memory of Doug Edgar
- Ken and Jane Darwin, in memory of Carol Wierenga
- Darlene Dawood, in memory of Carol Wierenga
- Donna Hunter, in memory of Doug Edgar
- Dennis Fineout, in memory of David and Tricia Chandler
- Lisa Gillespie, in memory of Robert Gillespie
- Ann McCauley Hughes, in memory of Conn McCauley
- John Lucas, in memory of Marie T. Lucas
- Maria Maki, in memory of Michele Hughes
- Don Masini, in memory of Kay McDonough Masini
- Kevin and Theresa McDonough, in memory of Jude Martin
- Robert Murray and Merry Gilbert, in memory of John Runberg
- Janet Nank, in memory of Richard Frederic Nank
- Barbara Noyes, in memory of James H. Noyes
- Susan Snow, in memory of Bill Turner
- Jackie Swearingen, in memory of Robert Swearingen
- Lori Taylor-Blitz, in memory of Noah Woolbright Taylor, Dexter Keller and Doug Edgar
- Joe and Virginia Tort, in memory of Jude Martin
- Jeff and Nancy Traudt, in memory of Bryan Foli

Love is how we remember, and remembrance is how love endures.

HONOR GIFTS

- Deb Bellor, in honor of Dave DeRosa
- Matt Broder and Susan Neitlich, in honor of George Broder
- Madison Ford, in honor of Mary Ford
- Dexter Keller, in honor of Terry and Nicole Shepardson
- Michael Noeker, in honor of Stephanie Noeker
- James Suennen, in honor of George Broder
- Shanna Van Kempen, in honor of Loren Meengs
- Chuck and Karen Swearingen, in honor of Conrad Swearingen
- Ann Tardy, in honor of Catherine Tardy, daughter of Charles Dunlevy
- Lisa Wimpfheimer, in honor of Eileen Bress and John Ward
- Peg Wilcox and Julie Nathe, in honor of Kitty McNamara
- Michael Butler, offered with heartfelt conviction in response to recent MACC grant cuts, reminding us that caring for history, arts, and culture is also an act of love and commitment.

Each of these names represents a life remembered, a relationship honored, and a story that matters. Together, they form a living record of love woven into Beaver Island's past, present, and future.

Just as the Print Shop once set type by hand to share the Island's news, today's Northern Islander continues that tradition, preserving these acts of love and remembrance as part of Beaver Island's living history.

With gratitude this Valentine season, we thank you for believing in the power of memory, kindness, and community. Your generosity reminds us that doing history is, at its heart, an act of love.

Happy Valentines Day,
Lori Taylor-Blitz

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Do you have a story to share?

Email it to our Editor!
editor@beaverislandhistory.org

BAY NORTH REALTY

26330 Back Highway
Beaver Island

A very convenient location, minutes from the ferry! Zoned Harbor District, this property can be used for business and/or residential. Set up to be a wonderful in-town rental property currently, this 5 bed, 2 bath home could make a wonderful year round residence as well. The open kitchen/dining/living area has plenty of space for gatherings with an elevated view of the Harbor from inside, or out on the deck. The owners have made many improvements over the past few years, with a new roof installed in May 2025. Three of the bedrooms are on the main floor, along with a full bathroom. The lower level is nicely finished with a family room, two more bedrooms, bathroom, and unfinished storage and laundry areas. The three stall garage provides plenty of room for your toys! With .68 acres you will have plenty of space outside too. This is a wonderful opportunity for someone looking for a unique in-town island property!

Heather Robinson, Associate Broker

37785 King's Highway, Beaver Island
c: 231.350.9414
Heather@BayNorthRealty.com
o: 231.622.3235 I BayNorthRealty.com

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TOWARD 250: BEAVER ISLAND AND THE AMERICAN STORY

Introduction by Lori Taylor-Blitz

As the United States approaches its Semiquincentennial in 2026, Toward 250 invites readers to explore how Beaver Island's history intertwines with the broader American narrative.

Each installment will highlight local stories of resilience, innovation, migration, maritime heritage, and community-building that reflect the ideals and complexities of the nation's past 250 years. From Native American lifeways and Irish immigration to fishing traditions, veterans' service, and the evolution of island governance, this column connects the national commemorative moment to the Island's lived experience.

Toward 250 also welcomes contributions from community members. Writers of all ages and backgrounds are encouraged to submit short articles, family stories, essays, images, and reflections that illuminate how Beaver Island's heritage connects to the American story. Submissions may honor local traditions, share memories, or highlight individuals whose lives help define our shared history. Together we will ensure the Semiquincentennial is not only observed but meaningfully shaped by the voices of those who call Beaver Island home.

A SHORT HISTORY OF GOVERNANCE ON THE BEAVER ISLAND ARCHIPELAGO

By Bobbi Welke

As the United States approaches its 250th anniversary, it's a good moment to look back at how our local communities took shape. The Beaver Island Archipelago has a surprisingly complex political history, shaped by early federal land policies, waves of settlement, and shifting county and township boundaries. The Archipelago's county-township structure began in 1818 with the final governance formed in 1901.

EARLY FOUNDATIONS

In the late 1700s, two major U.S. ordinances set the stage for settlement in the Great Lakes region:

- The Land Ordinance of 1785 created the grid system used to survey and sell land.
- The Northwest Ordinance of 1787 established how new territories and states would be governed—though it largely ignored the rights of Native peoples already living here.

Michigan became a U.S. Territory in 1805, and by 1818 the region that included the Beaver Island Archipelago was placed under Michilimackinac County (to become Mackinac County). After Michigan became a state in 1837, federal surveyors mapped Beaver Island (1845) and the outer islands (1849), opening the land for purchase. Settlement grew even faster after the Homestead Act of 1862, which offered 160 acres to settlers willing to live on and improve the land.

OVER A HALF CENTURY OF CHANGING COUNTIES AND TOWNSHIPS

Between 1847 and 1897, the Archipelago went through a remarkable series of reorganizations—seven state legislative changes in just fifty years. In 1901, a Charlevoix County action completed the Archipelago's reorganization. During this time, the Archipelago was assigned to five different counties: Mackinac (3 times), Emmet, Manitou, Leelanau, and Charlevoix, and saw the creation, reshaping, or dissolution of five different townships.

AMERICA 250

Some key moments include:

- 1847: The Archipelago was set off from Mackinac County and organized as Peaine Township, holding their first meeting at Alva Cable's store and trading post at Whiskey Point.
- 1847-1855: James J. Strang established a Mormon colony on Beaver Island, eventually declaring himself king. He was elected as a state representative in 1853 and 1855. Strang's political influence led to the creation of Manitou County in 1855, with the Village of St. James as the county seat. Manitou County included the Manitou and Fox Islands. Galilee Township was created on the southern portion of Beaver Island, with the boundary of Peaine Township adjusted. The first township meeting was to be held at the school in Galilee.
- 1856: After Strang's assassination and the removal of the Mormon community, Manitou County's government collapsed.
- 1859: Garden Island Township was created from Hat, Hog, and Garden Island and Peaine Township's boundaries shifted. The first township meeting was held at the Village of Peaine.
- 1861: Chandler Township was created in the northernmost portion of Beaver Island and included all of the outer islands. Garden Island Township was vacated. Peaine Township's boundaries again shifted.
- 1861-1869: The Beaver, Fox, and Manitou Islands' county affiliations were transferred to Mackinac, then Leelanau, and back to Mackinac Counties.
- 1895: Manitou County was officially dissolved, and the Archipelago was placed in Charlevoix County. The Fox and Manitou Islands were assigned to Leelanau County.
- 1897: Galilee Township was vacated with the property returned to Peaine Township.
- 1901: St. James Township was created by an act of the Charlevoix County Supervisors in its modern form with Peaine Township's boundaries again shifted, leaving the two-township Archipelago structure—St. James and Peaine—that remains today. It is likely that Chandler Township was vacated as part of this act.

ABOUT THE RESEARCH

This summary is based on the work of local historian Joan C. Vyse, published in 2002. Her detailed research traces every legislative action which includes the land survey descriptions affecting the islands (Towns, Ranges, and Sections). This version uses simplified descriptions to help readers visualize how the Archipelago's governance evolved over time.

MORNINGS ON THE BEACH

By Doris Larson

The following poem is from a collection titled "Mornings on the Beach." This particular poem is dated August 20, 1998.

Mist rises from the lake all across
Sand Bay.
The cool air and the
late sunrise
forecast the coming of fall.

"Was the campground full?"
"Only two other families - and
they weren'there the whole
time. We saw more deer
than people."

"I don't see many on my
morning walks -just their
footprints."

"We had a hard decision every
morning -to stay in the tent
and peek out at the deer or step
onto the beach and watch the
sunrise."
"Difficult choice," I agree.

At the campground a
photographer records
his campsite.
The sun reflects off the tent
poles, turning them silver.

The tailgate of his pickup is
open and the screen room is
folded and stowed inside.

"Time to pack up?" I ask."Yes.
We've had two wonderful
weeks,"he answers.

He shakes his head, as if he still
can'tbelieve his good fortune.
I wish him well and continue
my walk.

A mother duck leads her six
babies into the lake.

The gulls cry and fly over the water.

Some people call this Paradise.

Happy Valentine's Day
George Broder
Get Well Soon, George
Sending warm wishes for a smooth and speedy recovery.
Beaver Island wouldn't be quite the same without you,
and Spike is ready to welcome you back at full strength.
With care and good thoughts,
your friends at the Northern Islander, and your home.

Beaver Island Wildlife Club
Lake Geneserath
Ice Fishing Tournament
Feb. 21, 2026
Dawn to Dusk
1st, 2nd and 3rd place prizes
Adults- Biggest Pike and panfish by weight
Kids- biggest Pike and panfish by Weight
Also
Smallest Pike by Weight
Food available too!
Fun and Games
KIDS FREE
Adults- $10 registration at Lake G. on the day or early at the Hardware.

Beaver Island District Library

Nibwaakaawin

UPCOMING EVENTS:

NEA BIG READ:
Movies at the BIC Center: *My Side of the Mountain* on Feb. 28 for kids at 3 p.m. and *Into the Forest* for adults at 6 p.m.

LAKE GENESERATH ICE FISHING TOURNAMENT:
Feb. 21. In collaboration with the Beaver Island Wildlife Club, the Ice Fishing Tournament will be held on Feb. 21 at Lake Geneserath, ice and weather conditions permitting. If you haven't fished before, or if children want to learn, there will be time to show participants how.

DARK SKY EVENTS:
Find the Bear, win a prize! Report your sighting to the library and sign up for the drawing for prizes. Mercury at its highest point—Feb. 19–20

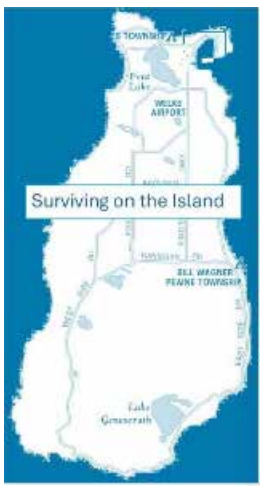
LTC SNOWSHOEING:
Feb. 4 and 5. Little Traverse Conservancy will be on the island to take schoolchildren snowshoeing and learn about various animal tracks. Any adults interested should contact the library or the school, and a late-afternoon trek may be arranged.

BEAVER TALES:
The interested parties met in January, but additional ideas are welcome. One idea is to incorporate a "bar" scene from the TV show Cheers, with folks sitting around talking about how they survive on the island while welcoming newcomers. Other ideas are encouraged. Meet Feb. 7 at 2 p.m. at the library.

AMERICA 250 WRITING:
This is the 250th anniversary of our country's founding. Community members are invited to submit positive articles, poems, or prose about our country's last 250 years and hopes for the future.

Submissions are due April 30.

Surviving on the Island books will be available in February at the library. The cost will be about $10 each. Stop in to pick one up. Thank you to all who submitted.



BOBI (BOOK CLUB):
The next meeting is on Feb. 18 at 3 p.m. The book to be discussed is Fredrik Backman's My Friends. All are welcome. A Zoom option is available; email the library at island.library@gmail.com.

KIDS STUFF!

GAME DAY!
Every Friday after school, kids and parents are invited to head to the library to play favorite board games. We have quite the collection, and you're welcome to bring your own, too. We have several kids who are competitive in chess and are always looking for opponents. It's a great way to kick off the weekend.

TEEN ART NIGHT:
This is held once a month for kids ages 13 and up. It is held after hours to allow a relaxed atmosphere for teens to socialize and express themselves through art. More details can be found on the library's Facebook page as well as the community calendar. If you are interested in volunteering to host one night, please reach out to Tara at the library.

BABES AND TODDLERS:
Occurs on Tuesdays at 10 a.m. to allow kids to socialize and play with some new toys. Parents can chat with one another as well.

HOMESCHOOL MEET-UP:
Tuesdays at 2:15 p.m. and features STEM and other activities for homeschool elementary students.

FIERO CODE AND GIRLS WHO CODE:
Saturdays at 1 p.m. and is open to all kids ages 8 and up.

FEBRUARY IS…

"Why do we need libraries? I can read any book online!"

Libraries are more than books. Here at the Beaver Island District Library, you can check out DVDs of movies, TV shows, documentaries, and children's movies — for free.

Need to print something from your laptop or phone? We can help. Need to send or receive a fax? We've got you covered. Need to scan and send a document? We can do that, too.

Don't have internet or a c omputer to use? We have both. Have a question about your laptop or phone? Staff can usually help with that as well.

Do you like to work jigsaw puzzles but have no room at home, or have a cat that likes to play with the pieces? Try our community puzzle table.

Do you have a group that wants a place to meet, play cards, discuss books, or just sip tea or coffee and socialize? Bookies of Beaver Island, our local book club, meets every month on the third Wednesday at 3 p.m. A Zoom link is available if you are off-island or cannot make it in. Check the website or inside the library for upcoming books. We have the space.

Do you want to hear from some of the authors we feature? We host several each year. Do you want to learn something new? Ask, and we'll try to organize a program. Crafts, technology, authors, and more are available at the library.

Do your kids need somewhere safe to go after school until you pick them up? We offer a schedule of afterschool programs: Mondays — Craft Club; Tuesdays — Taste the World; Wednesdays — Lego Club; Thursdays — STEM activities; Fridays — Board Games. On weekends, we offer coding clubs for kids ages 8+ and adults.

No school-age kids? We offer babies and toddlers a chance to get together with other parents and children for social time.

HOMESCHOOL PARENTS AND KIDS:
We offer a meet-up just for you, featuring STEM activities and more.

OUR SEED LIBRARY:
The seed library is filled with a variety of seeds to plant, free of charge. We also feature information sessions about growing and planting and other gardening topics. Volunteers are welcome to help with weeding, watering, and planting our Native Plant gardens in the spring and summer months.

Do you work remotely and need reliable high-speed internet? Come to the library.

Why do we need libraries? The answer is obvious. Support your library and stop in to see all we have to offer.

SIGNS, SIGNS, EVERYWHERE SIGNS — Each sign posted at the library has been carefully designed and placed for your convenience. As always, suggestions are welcome.

How to observe:
Learn more about African-American history. Here are a few books we suggest reading during Black History Month:

- Autobiography of Malcolm X by Malcolm X
- Letter from a Birmingham Jail by Martin Luther King Jr.
- Invisible Man by Ralph Ellison
- The Fire Next Time by James Baldwin
- Native Son by Richard Wright

Depending on the size and age of your family, choose kid-friendly recipes. While having fun together, children will practice many skills. Older children will polish their reading abilities. Following instructions becomes a practiced skill, and everyone will sharpen their chemistry and math skills. They will have so much fun they won't even realize they are learning. After all the baking and cleaning up, settle down to savor the results and enjoy family time and delicious rewards.

Tried and True Family Favorite Recipes

Mary Holm's Homemade Cheesy Potato Soup

Submitted by Rach Becker

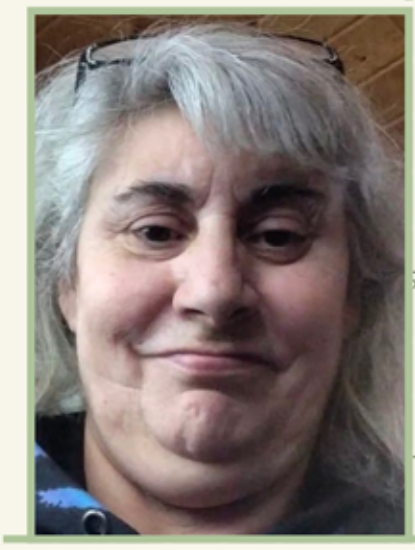
Each month, we will feature recipes that are sure to have you coming back for seconds. These are the recipes that we grew up with and still make today.

Mary (Herriman) Holm has lived in Charlevoix for the majority of her life. She is the oldest of five siblings. She would frequently see the Beaver Islander head out on the lake, but it was not until June of 2016 that she moved to Beaver Island. A friend was going to work for Eric and Dana Hodgson, and Mary told him that if she could find a place to live, she would move too.

She began working at Stoney Acre Grill, Shamrock, the Sunset Restaurant (in the Beaver Island Lodge), and Daddy Frank's during the eight years before she retired. She moved back to Charlevoix in June of 2025.

The days are beginning to get longer, and the sun offers hope for warmer days ahead.

Blasta! (Irish for delicious)



Use a large kettle and add:

- 10 pounds of potatoes, diced small. Add water to cover the potatoes by about half an inch.
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon pepper
- 1 to 2 packages of smoked or Polish sausage, sliced thin

Cook together until potatoes are tender.

Add 2 cups of milk, a large brick of Velveeta cheese, plus any other cheeses you prefer. Cook until melted and creamy.

This recipe serves a large crowd. You can always add fewer potatoes and milk for a smaller group.

It's a great winter recipe. The original recipe was made by Mary's grandmother, Lucille Rankin Herriman, without cheese. Then Mary's mother, Patricia Alexander Herriman, added just a little cheese. When Mary started making the soup, she added a variety of cheeses.

BEAVER ISLAND COA SENIORS - WHAT'S UP? [FEBRUARY/MARCH]

By Dawn George

Greetings! And a Happy New Year, to Beaver Island Seniors…

As we begin 2026, the COA office is happy to begin a quarterly article featuring basic information and offerings. We hope this will assist you with your awareness of activities and events, as well as office hours and seasonal changes, if any. Our most popular offerings currently, are Voucher meals, Congregate luncheons, and activities (free) held at the Peaine Township Hall.

The voucher program is for B.I. Seniors who are 60 years old and older, as well as their spouse if 59 years old and under. Up to 20 vouchers can be purchased monthly. Only one voucher a day can be used. Cost is $3.00 each. Vouchers purchased after Oct.1 are valid until September 30 the following year. The participating restaurants each have a Voucher menu for meals that can be purchased. *We are happy to add a Fish meal option for the months of February and March. *Please remember to tip your server as tips and taxes are not included. You may pick up paper-work at any time during regular office hours.

We are planning two congregate meals for February and March:

Friday, February 20, our theme will be Valentines Day and Partner appreciation.

Friday, March 20, our theme will be all about Spring! And of course, St. Patrick's Day. Wearing of the green encouraged!

Our congregate luncheons will continue through April. We hope you will join us!

We offer activities for all seniors that include:

Monday and Thursday

Cardio Drumming: 10-11 a.m. (Equipment provided for Cardio)

Art Therapy: 11 a.m.-12 p.m. (Art supplies are what you bring)

Wednesday

Art Therapy: 3-5 p.m.

Call me with any questions. I can provide outlines for what we would like to explore.

In addition to these basic offerings, we will have a monthly distribution of Free Produce and other goods for Seniors on the following dates:

February 2 & 27: 12 p.m. to 2 p.m.

March 27: 12 p.m. to 2 p.m.

April 24: 12 p.m. to 2 p.m.

Please take what you need and leave the rest for your neighbors. This program has been made available due to the generous support of Manna.

We plan to keep our office hours the same for the Winter and Spring seasons as consistently as possible.

Office Hours~2026

Monday:	9-9:30 a.m. & 12 p.m.-2 p.m.
Tuesday:	9 a.m.-10 a.m. & 12 p.m.-2 p.m.
Wednesday:	12 p.m.-2:30 p.m.
Thursday:	9-9:30 a.m. & 12 p.m.-2 p.m.
Friday:	9 a.m.-10 a.m. & 12 p.m.-2 p.m.

We do our best to accommodate the needs of all our seniors, however there are times when staff are unavailable while fulfilling other program obligations. We ask your patience when this is the case.

Please ask us about any services or concerns you may have, if we don't know, we will find the best answer possible to connect you with results and services. We are located at 26466 Donegal Bay Rd.

Looking forward to meeting you!

Dawn M. George, Site Coordinator
Charlevoix Co. Commission on Aging
231-448-2124

BEAVER ISLAND RURAL HEALTH CENTER

FEBRUARY 2026

American Heart Month

FEBRUARY

SEVEN THINGS STUDIES SUGGEST TO DO FOR YOUR HEART THIS MONTH...

1. Get moving. Everyday. It's cheap and easy.

2. Quit smoking or tobacco use.

3. Brush your teeth. And don't forget to floss.

4. Have a laugh. It reduces blood pressure.

5. Eat healthier—and eat breakfast. It should be more than 5% of your daily calories.

6. Get good shuteye. 7 - 9 hours. Poor sleep leads to 26% higher risk of cardiovascular death, heart attack, heart failure and stroke.

7. Manage stress! Relax your mind and body with yoga, meditation, a good book or even a warm bath.

Join in National Wear Red Day on Friday, February 6, 2026 and rock your red to raise awareness of heart disease and stroke.

BI CHILDREN'S DENTAL HEALTH CLINIC FEBRUARY 26 & 27, 2026

The Beaver Island Elks Lodge #2886, the Beaver Island Rural Health Center, the Beaver Island Community School and Dental Clinics North bring the 5th Annual BI Children's Dental Health Clinic to Beaver Island!

All school-age Island children are encouraged to participate. Enrollment materials are available at the BIRHC at 231-448-2275.

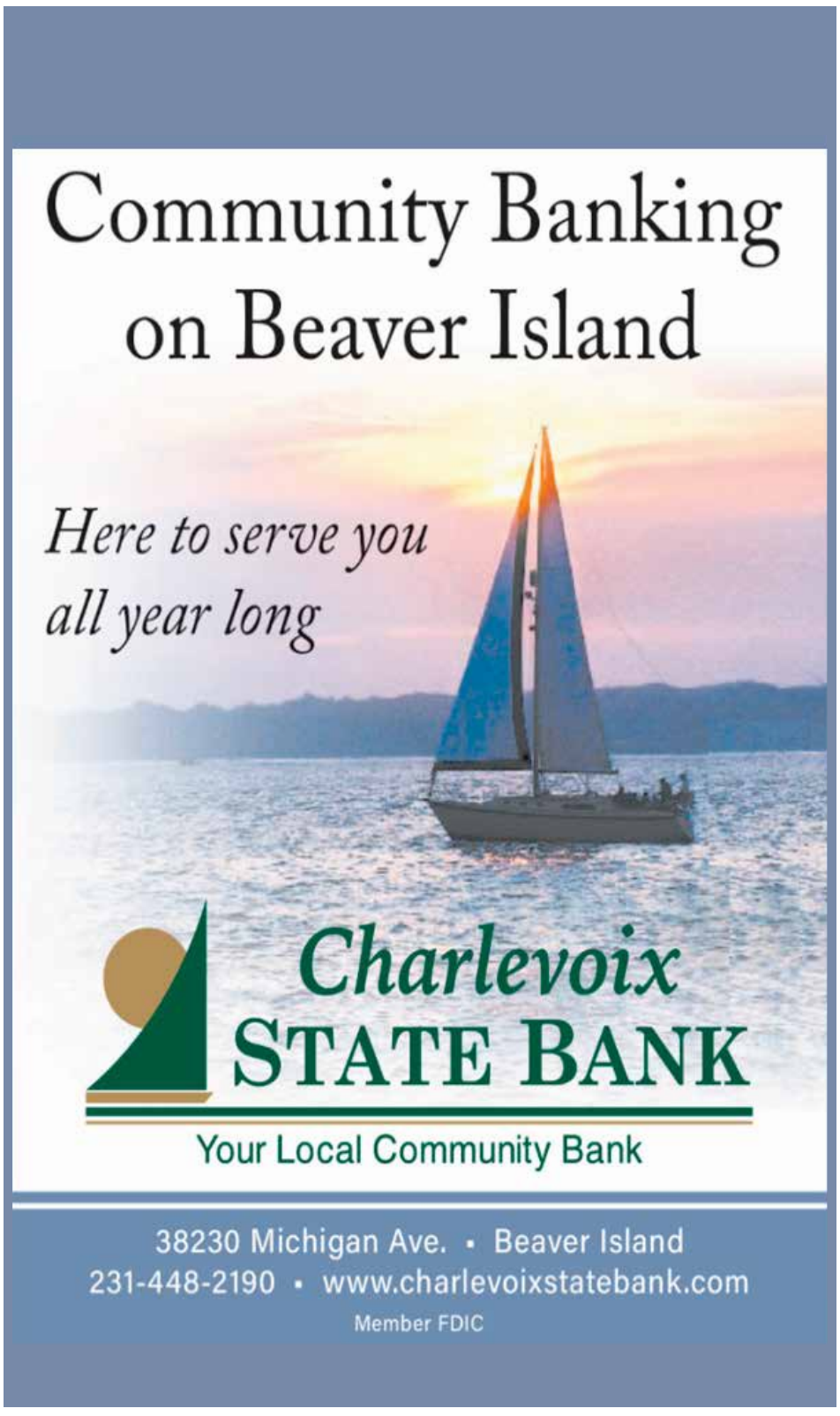
NEW!! 'KIDS AT HEART' OVER 80 YEARS OLD SPECIAL DENTAL CLINIC MARCH 13, 2026

Participants will receive dental exams and dental health assessments, cleanings and x-rays. Enrollment materials are available at the BIRHC at 231-448-2275.

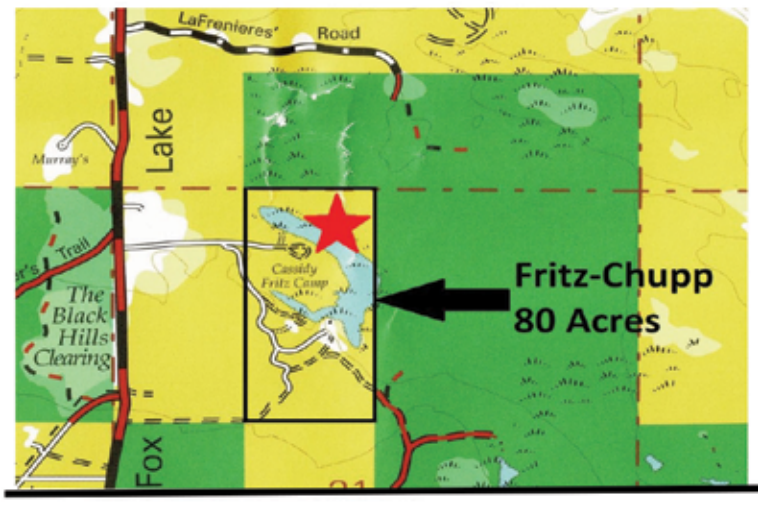
Cancer affects everyone.

- There are more than 100 types of cancer.
- Over 2 million Americans were diagnosed with cancer in 2025.
- Over 618,000 died from their disease.
- More than 18.6 million are living with it.
- Research shows that 30 - 50 percent of these cases and nearly half of the deaths can be attributed to modifiable risk factors – smoking, excess body weight, physical inactivity, and excessive exposure to the sun, among others.
- Screening and early detection are key to prevention, too.
- Talk to your healthcare provider about available screenings for the top five most common cancers:
  1) Breast 2) Prostate 3) Lung
  4) Colorectal 5) Melanoma

Cancer Prevention Action Week Is Feb 17 - 23, 2026!

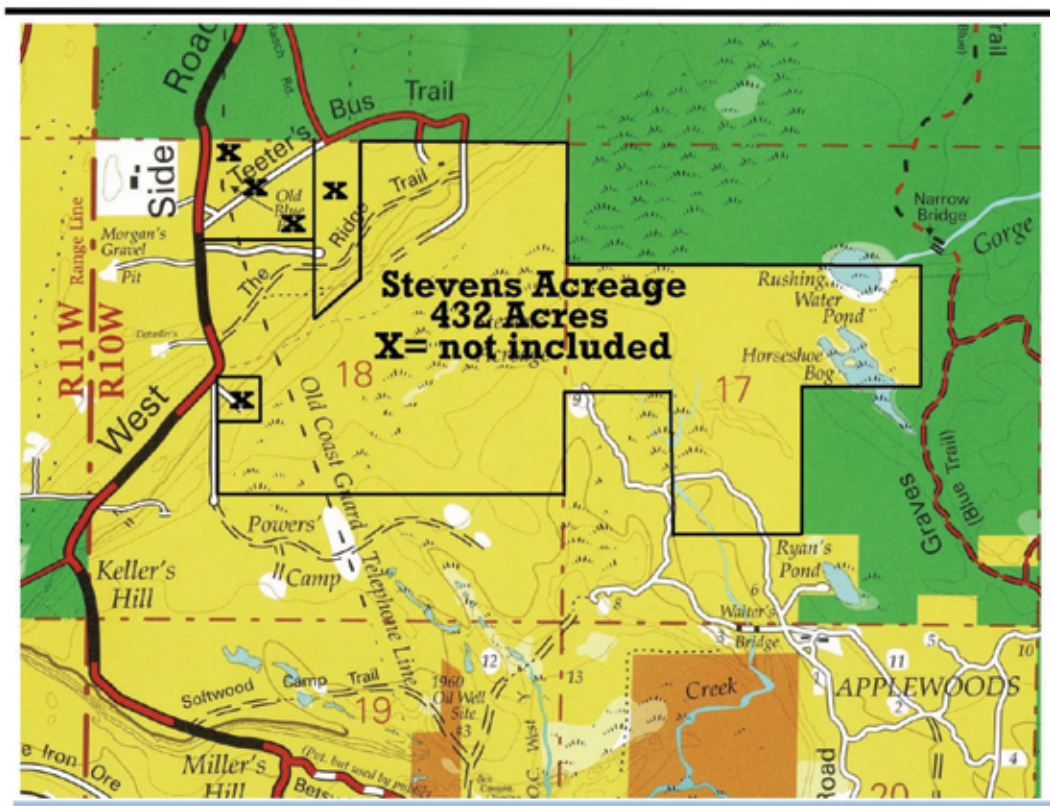


Acreage on a Beautiful Lake Michigan Island



Fritz-Chupp 80 Acre Parcel—Fox Lake Road - A wonderful 80 Acre Parcel 1/4 mile East of Fox Lake Rd about a mile South of Beaver Island Township's Airport and about 3/4 mile from Fox Lake. This parcel is mostly hardwoods trees with primarily Sugar Maple and Beech trees on it, except for the pond area North and East of the small hunting cabin. It also has logging roads that were built all through primarily the South half of the 80 Acres. On its North line there is a 120 acre piece of State land, and on its East line, a 160 piece. It would make a wonderful deer hunting camp but it could also be used for a family that wants gardens and fruit trees and wood sheds, etc. Whether it's for a small farm, or for a cabin in the woods secluded with miles of State land to roam, or a hunting camp with small orchards and clover food plots, this 80 could provide a perfect spot for everyone.
$199,000

Softwood Camp Trail—An 80 Acre Parcel of fantastic hunting land for deer and grouse with its SW corner just touching West Side Rd. Its eastern line is the western line of the Applewoods LLC 315 Acre hunting camp that has numerous apple orchards and clover patches. This 80 is in the heart of one of the best deer hunting areas on the Island. This parcel could be used as vacant land for hunting, or as a hunting camp with building s and blinds, or for a family's cabin in the woods. Power and telephone lines are just about 700 feet away. The party buying this acreage would have a lot of support and help on its development from the listing broker, Ed Wojan whose LLC owns most of the property that is a mile and a quarter wide east to west from the east line of this property. No offers less than the asking price will be considered. From the SW corner of this acreage it is only 3/8 mile to Iron Ore Bay. **$200,000.**



Steven's Deer Camp Holdings – 00 West Side Road—Ten contiguous acreage parcels totaling 432 Acres in Sections 17 and 18 of T37N R10W. This large chunk of fantastic property is shown on the 2018 Wojan-Cashman map of Beaver Island as "Steven's Acreage". Its NW corner is just below Teeter's Bus Trail abutting State land about ¾ of a mile S of Miller's Marsh to the logging road on State land known as Graves Road. It runs from the West Side Road to Rushing Water Pond and Horseshoe Bog both of which have most of their area on this private parcel. It has a bit of frontage on West Side Road. About half of this acreage parcel is just north of the 300 plus acre parcel known as Applewoods, which is a large hunting camp with 5 orchards. This land varies from the open water holes mentioned above with many hardwoods upland parcels and also many cedar swamp areas and additional mixed forest lands. It would make one of the best hunting camps on Beaver Island. Seller wants to sell the whole piece to one buyer. It would be a very good large hunting preserve that could be purchased by an LLC that had Four to ten members. Seller is firm at the asking price at $2500 per acre. Listed price is **$1,080,000.**

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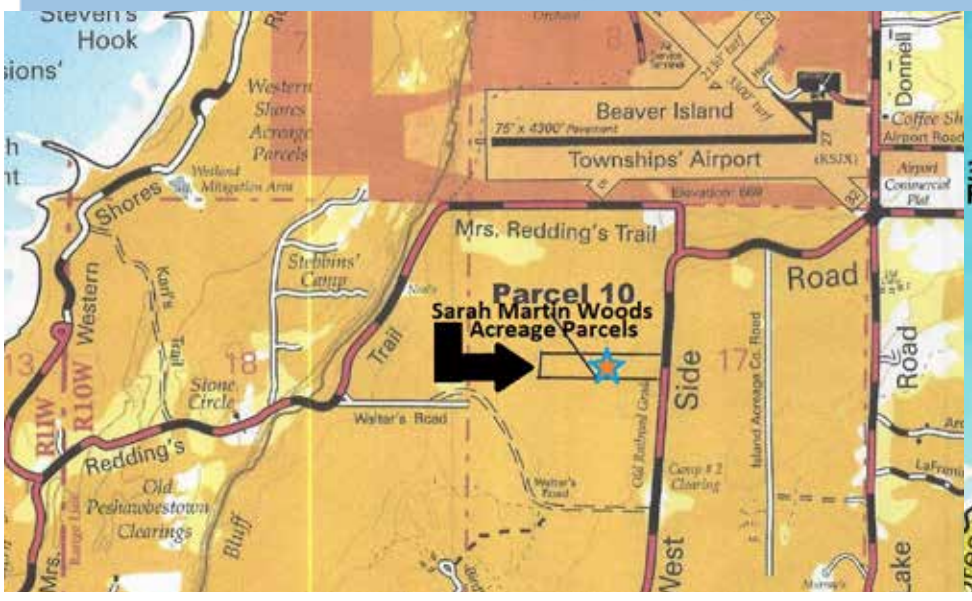

ON THE FRONT PORCH WITH ELEANOR MCDONOUGH

By Michelle LaFreniere

Eleanor Gallagher McDonough is an absolute gift to everyone who is lucky enough to know her. I was able to visit her at her home in Charlevoix. She is the first islander I have interviewed off the island.

Her island roots run deep.

Eleanor was born to James (Young James) and Theresa Gallagher on Beaver Island, the second child of three. This Gallagher family was known as the Bowery Gallaghers. Eleanor was born in their family home, which was where the Emerald Island Inn sits now. They also had a farm out at the Stone House. They had cows, and her sister Janet had a horse that they brought to town for the winters.

Eleanor's paternal grandparents were James and Kitty Gallagher. Their home was the house that sits between Lisa Gillespie's shop, Shipwreck Shirts, and the blue house near the corner of Gallagher and Main. Historically, it is known as the house that had the first public telephone on the island. I believe, somewhere, there is still a call log from that phone floating around.

Her maternal grandparents were Dan P. Boyle (Turner) and Maggie Boyle. They had the farm on Sloptown Road near Piper's Corner. A stone on the corner memorializes that. It is currently owned by a descendant, the family of the late Morris Boyle.

Eleanor graduated from McKinley School in 1955. It sat behind where the current school is now. It was two stories high, and the first floor held the first- through fourth-grade students and the second the fifth- through eighth-grade students. The high school was in what is now the Parish Hall kitchen. They were, of course, taught by the Dominican Sisters. There was also a little building in front of the McKinley School where they held classes.

The Parish Hall kitchen also held a small library that her mother started with the help of a man named Tom Walsh from Grand Rapids. It was not there long, but it was over and above what the school library had.

Her classmates were Johnny LaFreniere, Margaret Ann LaFreniere, Margie Martin Armstrong, Audrey Gatliff Smallwood, Alice Dubiel, and Bill Vail.

She feels very blessed to have been raised on the island. She likens it to a big family. Some of her favorite memories are of making music with other locals and dancing at the Shamrock. She says Friday nights were for the teenagers and young single adults. Saturday was reserved for older married couples. She took piano lessons from Mrs. Palmer, who at the time was the doctor's wife. Vera Wojan taught her to play the organ as an adult. She gave Vera a break when she could. She played for some weddings; most notable to me was Donald and Lillian Cole's wedding.

She loved being raised close to cousins like Rosie McDonough Zajakowski and Kay McDonough Masini, and her good friend Roland Cull. The kids were all very active in the church as well. Another blessing was having all of their grandparents nearby.

In the winter, they loved to go sledding. Hall Corner Hill was the one they used most. Bundy's Hill (across the street from Sheri Richards Real Estate Office) was another place they went. Ice skating, while not Eleanor's thing, was very much enjoyed by others. The harbor was their ice-skating rink. They had bonfires out there, too.

Kids at that time loved to play Canasta and Pinochle. Her parents always welcomed the kids into their home. They would make fudge or homemade ice cream. Sometimes Eleanor baked a cake.

There were a lot more dances at the hall then, too. The nuns and families would help the kids put on plays and skits. Her Uncle Willie John Gallagher was an excellent step dancer. They had potlucks and box socials back then, too.

The Christmas Bazaar was a big event everyone looked forward to. So much to do, they were never bored.

St. Patrick's Day was a huge thing then. It always started with morning Mass. It was followed by a meal and programs the kids would put on for the adults. It was always followed by dancing. In those days, families would bring the children to dance, too. Baby buggies would line the wall while parents danced and babies slept.

Eleanor met the love of her life at a very young age. He was her neighbor, just two doors down. His family home was located across the street from Ed Wojan's Real Estate Office. He played seven different instruments and was self-taught on all of them. Most notably, he played the fiddle. He loved his family, friends, music, all children, and Beaver Island. Any child who came to their home in Wyoming, Mich., was allowed to play his fiddle. He wanted nothing more than to pass on his love of music. One of their greatest joys was playing music together. To honor that, Eleanor and her son Patrick and his wonderful wife, Jenny, started the Glen McDonough Memorial Concert. It is held on the first Saturday after July 4 at Red Deer. They established the Eve Glen Music School, which holds lessons on site prior to the actual concert. They invite people to come and play and put a donation jar at the entrance. It is a fun night that is well attended.

In later years, her parents moved off island into the house that Eleanor lives in now in Charlevoix. As Eleanor's siblings had all relocated to the Grand Rapids area, her parents moved there as well and rented a place to be close to their kids and grandchildren. Her older sister was Janet O'Donnell, and her younger brother was Brian Gallagher. Many of you will remember them. They all lived within five blocks of each other. While each family had their own lives, they made it important to get together now and then so the kids (nine in total) could play together. They are all still close to this day.

We ended our visit talking about her favorite place on the island. Like many others, it is the Point. You can never go home without going to the Point.

These days find her still doing ministry work. She had to give up taking communion to the hospital and nursing home here and volunteering at the Rainbow Shop, but she still makes time for Mass whenever possible and writes a lot of cards to cheer people up—and that she does. She also has a few friends with whom she converses on a daily basis. Her son and his family call most every night, and she really loves that. Her only grandchild, a lovely young lady named Shea, brings her great joy.

Well, Eleanor, you bring great joy to all who are blessed enough to know you.

ORVILLE - A RAGS TO RICHES STORY

By Michelle LaFreniere

My name is Orville. I am a handsome devil, full of charm and personality. I am an orange tabby with an unusual rags-to-riches story.

I first came on the scene 10 years ago. I was nothing more than a feral (very feral) tomcat, living at the south end of the island. I was minding my own business one day when I saw an easy dinner. It was just beyond my reach, but I was tired, and the day had been long. It wasn't easy foraging for my own dinner every single day. I had been on my own for as long as I could remember (four to six years by Dr. Jeff's estimates). I attempted to reach this yummy-smelling dinner in what appeared to be a round, silver-colored dish. I had to reach just a little farther, so I stretched... and slam! A door shut behind me, and there I was, stuck in this thing. I had my easy dinner but no way out.

The next morning, this lady came and picked me up. She never even took me out of the contraption I was in. I was not happy. Everyone exclaimed how cute I was, and they called me Chi. Chi? Who was that? I had heard some stories being thrown around in my crowd about some cute chick that was lost. I never saw her, never. I did hear she had white on her chest, and she was a little bit of a thing. I was a) not little, b) had no white on my chest, and c) I certainly was not a girl.

I got to meet Dr. Jeff Powers. Apparently, his job was to stick me with needles and take care of my ability to make more just like me. I liked him despite it. I would never want him to know that, but yeah, he is a good guy.

Fast forward a little bit. I got to live with this fellow ginger. She spoiled me rotten. They told her not to let me outside. I cried daily about it. Finally, in spring, she would open the windows and leave for work. Every night, she would come home to every single screen on the ground and me sitting on the back porch waiting for her. Boom. I win!

Things grew and changed, and she moved. I went through a few temporary homes, but she always came back to find me, feed me, and try to snuggle with me, but I was not having that. She took me to the country. I made it back to town overnight. Boom. I won again. I spent the summer doing as every teenager on Beaver Island does, roaming town and making friends everywhere I went. I had a few favorites. I thank them greatly.

Fall came, and it was getting colder, and I was getting nervous about that. My ginger's boss said, "Let's make him a terminal cat." I now live at the Island Airways Welke Terminal. I get copious amounts of snacks every day. I have three beds. I have lots of bunny friends. Kids and their big people come to pet me all day. I rule the roost. I am supposed to be earning my keep. I think I may not have read the entire job description. But all in all, I am fat, happy, and loving my new life here.

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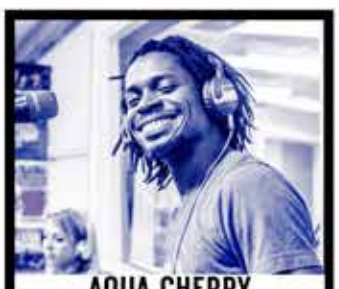
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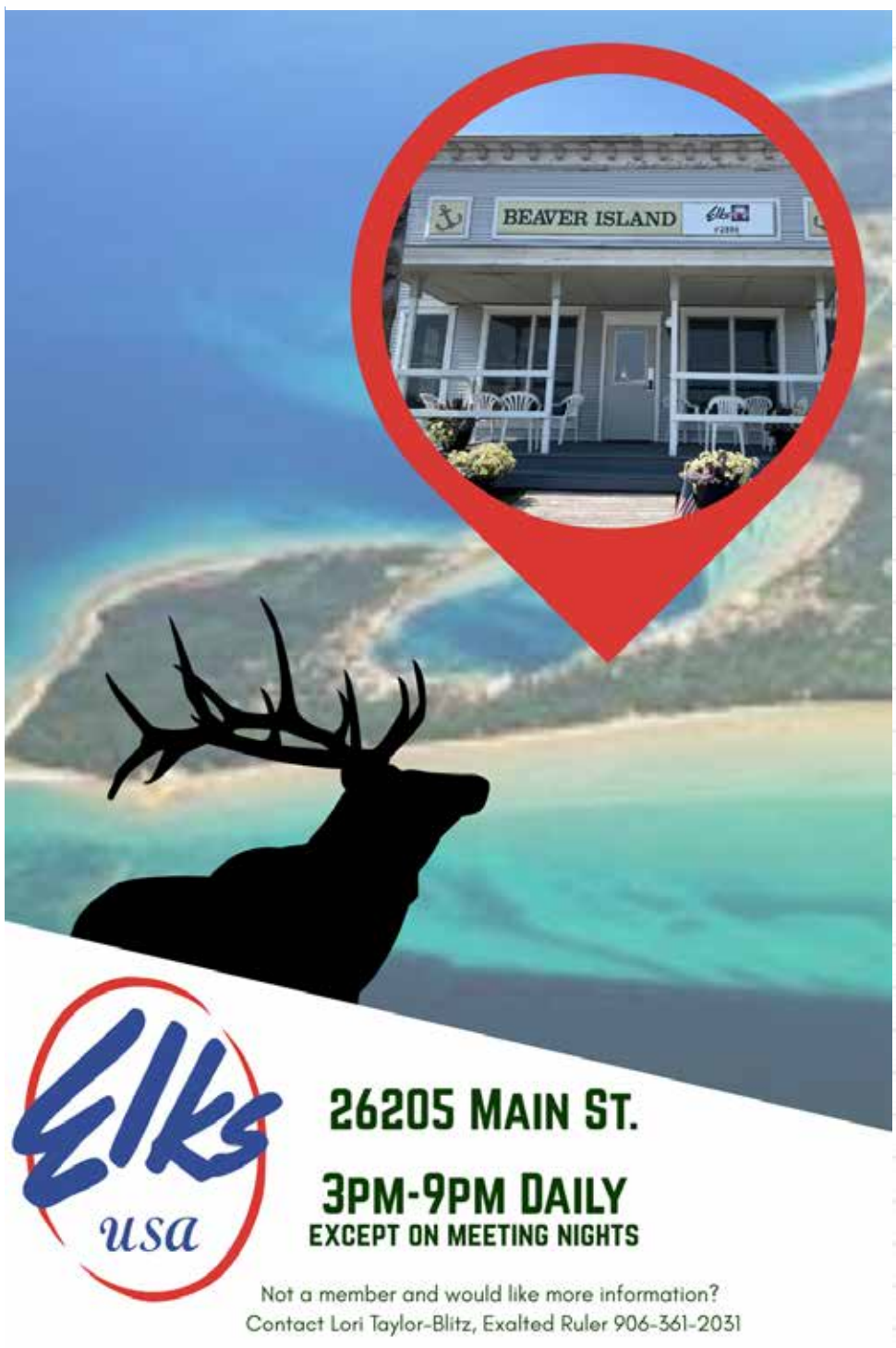

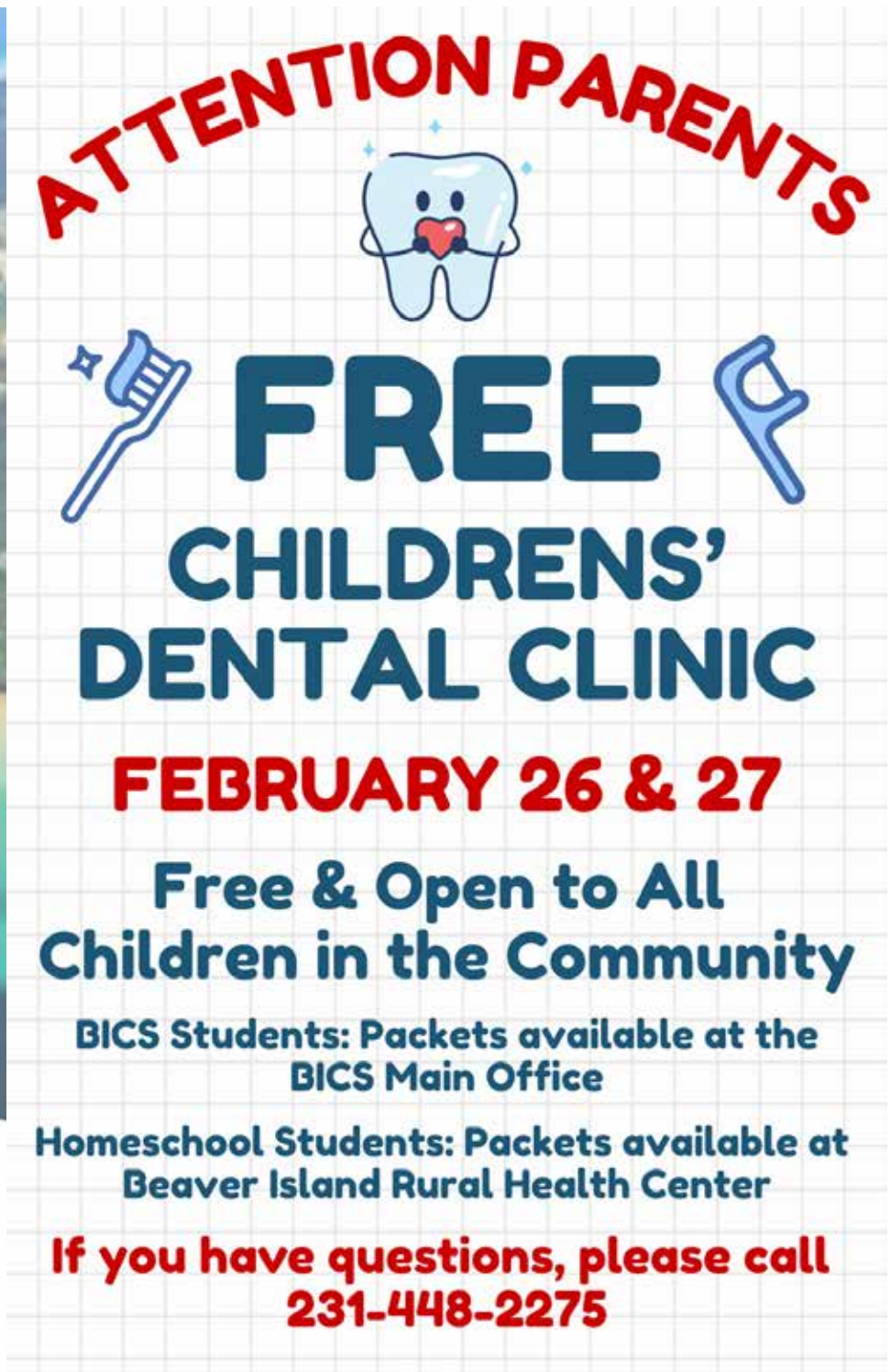
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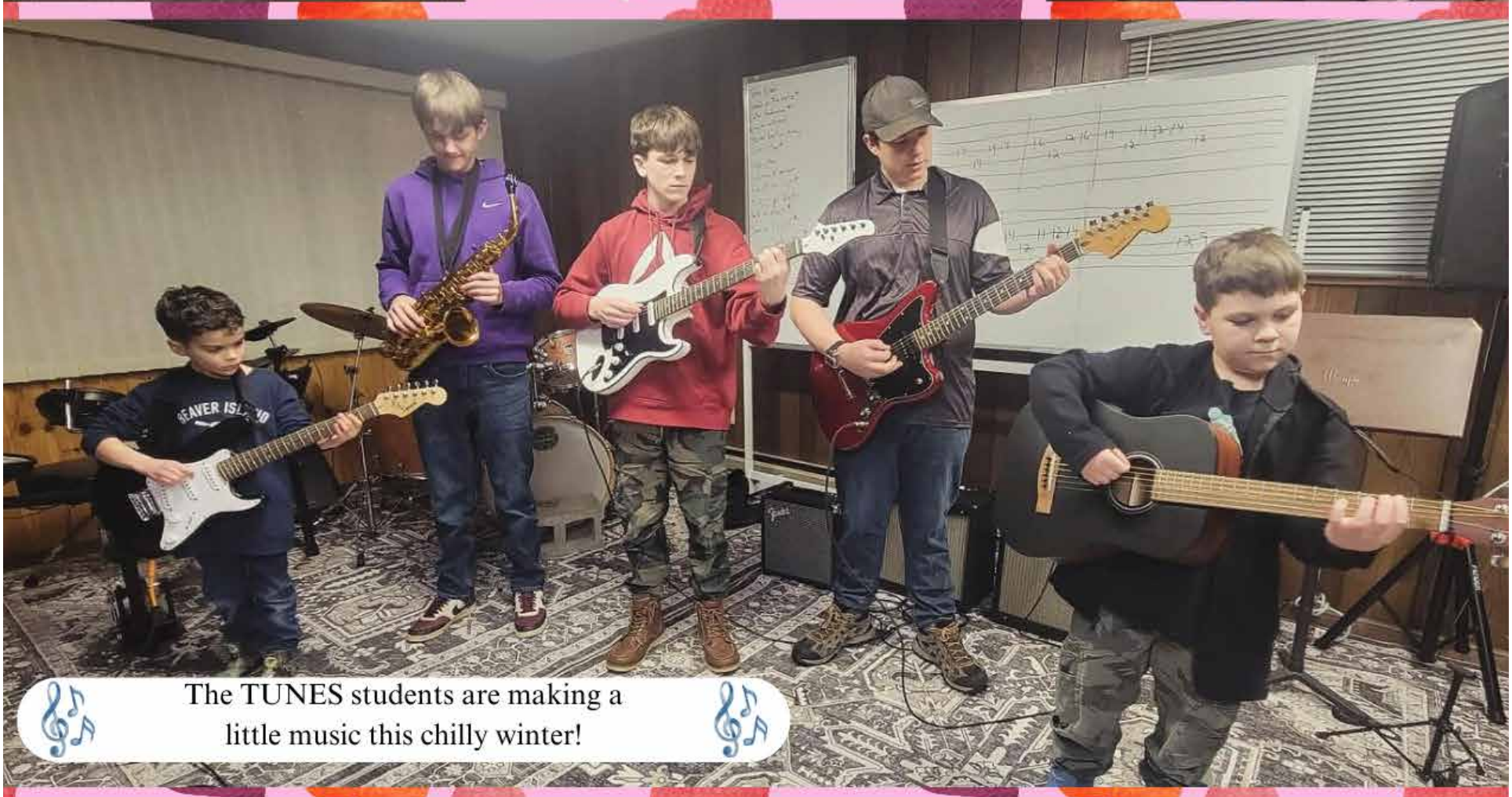
Community Collage

BEAVER ISLAND AT A GLANCE

The Beaver Island Community School 5th & 6th grade students are carrying on a time-honored tradition of creating class quilts! Thank you, Mrs. Donna Stambaugh and Ms. Mary Kenwabikise!



The TUNES students are making a little music this chilly winter!

Beaver Island Community School students had a blast playing in the snow that arrived in early January.

Photo Credit: Beaver Island Community School and TUNES

The Kids' Corner

Sponsored by Lori Taylor-Blitz

Word Search

L	W	M	O	U	T	H	W	A	S	H	G	T	V	E
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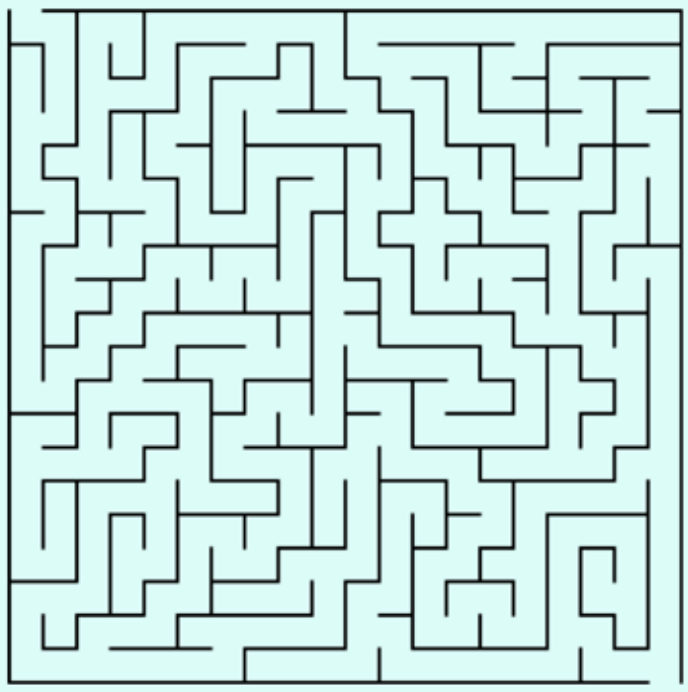

Don't forget to bring your completed kids' page to the Beaver Island Print Shop Museum for a prize!

AND, send a picture of you and your page to **editor@beaverislandhistory.org** to be featured in the monthly paper!

Children's Dental Clinic

Feb 26 & 27

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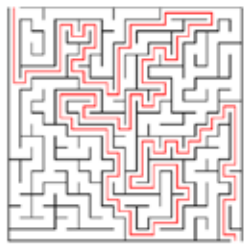
Packets available @ Beaver Island Rural Health Clinic

See Jan 2026 Issue, Page 15 for details



ANSWERS

BEAVER ISLAND IRISH HERITAGE GROUP ANNOUNCES 2026 INITIATIVES

RECENT BOARD PLANNING SESSION SETS VISION FOR GROWTH AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

By Kathleen "Kitty" McNamara

The Beaver Island Irish Heritage Group is pleased to announce the successful completion of its recent board planning session, marking a significant step forward in advancing its mission to celebrate and preserve Irish heritage on Beaver Island and beyond. The session brought together board members and staff to update the organization's strategic plan, appoint new officers, establish committees, and set ambitious goals for the coming year.
The updated strategic plan will soon be available to view at the group's newly launched BIIHG website www.biihg.com.

Following a productive meeting, the Board elected these officers to lead the organization:

Chair: Paul Cole
Vice Chair: Angel Welke
Treasurer: Shannon McDonough
Secretary: Marlaina Cole

Joining the officers are its board of directors: Linda Wearn, Barry McDonough, Bailey McDonough, Brian Williams, Catherine Meintsma, and Tory Fingerle, whose continued dedication to the organization finds them serving on one or more committees and volunteering their time in countless ways.

To advance the organization's priorities, the Board formed the following committees, each with a dedicated chair:

Féile Logistics Committee, Chair Barry McDonough
Finance & Development Committee, Chair Shannon McDonough
Marketing & Communication Committee, Chair Tory Fingerle
Cultural Programming Committee, Chair Paul Cole

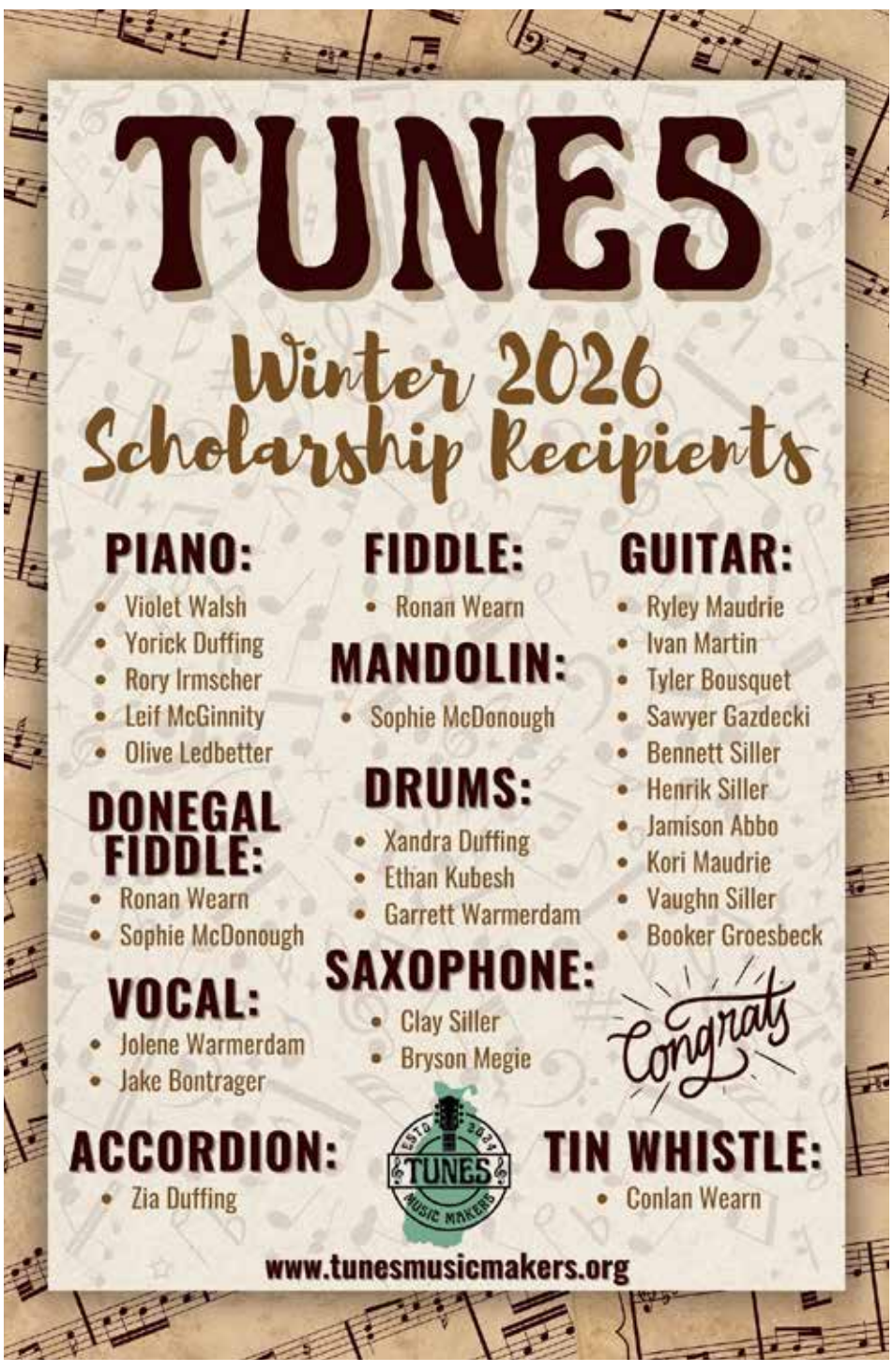
These committees will focus on event organization, financial sustainability, outreach, and cultural activities, ensuring a vibrant calendar of initiatives throughout the year.

The Board's work is supported by staff members Kathleen McNamara (Executive Director/Festival Coordinator), Katie Johnson (Bookkeeper), and Chris Sorensen (Administrative Assistant), whose work behind the scenes enables the group to fulfill its mission and bring new initiatives to fruition.

Looking into 2026, the Beaver Island Irish Heritage Group is committed to:

- Curating the annual Emerald Isle Irish Féile – welcoming an amazing 2026 lineup including world renown Altan, the Arranmore Pipe Band, Jerry Early and Friends, Danny Gillespie and Friends, Stay Happy Band, Bastard Bearded Irishmen, Ruby John, Brother Crowe and much more.
- Expanding year-round cultural activities and programming
- Supporting and growing Currach Club membership
- Sustaining the popular Tides That Tie podcast
- Strengthening finance and development initiatives
- Adopting a new organizational logo and building a dedicated Irish Heritage website to compliment its Emerald Isle Irish Féile website
- Collaborating with other Irish heritage groups
- Deepening connections with Arranmore
- Seeking grants and new funding opportunities
- Ensuring compliance with 501(c)3 best practices and regulatory standards

The Board expresses its gratitude to all who contribute to the success of the Beaver Island Irish Heritage Group. With strong leadership, clear direction, and a passionate team, the organization is poised for an exciting year of cultural celebration and community engagement. All members of the community, local media, and stakeholders are invited to join in upcoming activities and support the group's mission.



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DID YOU KNOW? MAESTRO NORDLING'S "GIFTS" SPAN 17 YEARS!

Submitted by Baraque on Beaver

Baroque on Beaver will be celebrating its 25th anniversary this coming season. The tremendous growth and quality of our Festival could not have happened without the devoted and priceless leadership of our Maestro and Music Director, Robert Nordling.

Pictured is Robert Nordling.

Since being appointed Principal Conductor of the Festival Orchestra in 2009, Robert has created exciting programs and conducted stellar performances across a wide repertoire of music including baroque, classical, opera, and jazz. Many of us are still thanking him for the remarkable job he did in shepherding us through a successful online Festival during the 2020 pandemic!

A bit of our Maestro's background highlights: Upon graduating from Wheaton College Conservatory of Music, Robert was awarded a conducting fellowship to the Los Angeles Philharmonic Institute, where he worked with several accomplished conductors including Leonard Bernstein and Michael Tilson Thomas. Over the years, he has served as Music Director of the Shoreline Music Society, the Lake Forest Civic Orchestra, and the Bandung Philharmonic in Indonesia.

He has also appeared with numerous other orchestras and chamber orchestras throughout the Midwest, Chicago, San Francisco and abroad. As an educator, Robert has served on the music faculty of Calvin University and Trinity International University, teaching music history, music appreciation, and conducting. A 2019 Fulbright Award supported his work developing young talented conductors in Indonesia. Those of us who have attended his Festival opening talks at the Print Shop have benefited from his tremendous knowledge he so joyfully shares with his audiences.

Music lovers from across the island, across Michigan, and beyond have sung the praises of Maestro Nordling as a scholar, performer, teacher, and conductor. He has helped to make Baroque on Beaver a widely-recognized annual destination event and has put us on "the map" by granting permission for our concerts to be recorded and replayed throughout the year by Midwest Public Radio stations across Michigan.

Robert resides in Grand Rapids, Michigan with his wife, Cherith, and their Welsh terrier, Bowyn.

Passionate. Intense. Vivid. Just some of the words that critics and musicians across the world have used to describe our Maestro's performances. We wholeheartedly agree!

The Beaver Island Performing Arts Alliance (BIPAA) Board looks forward to welcoming you to our Silver Anniversary Season, July 23rd through August 1st.

CELEBRATING 100 YEARS OF BLACK HISTORY MONTH

By Brittney Rittof

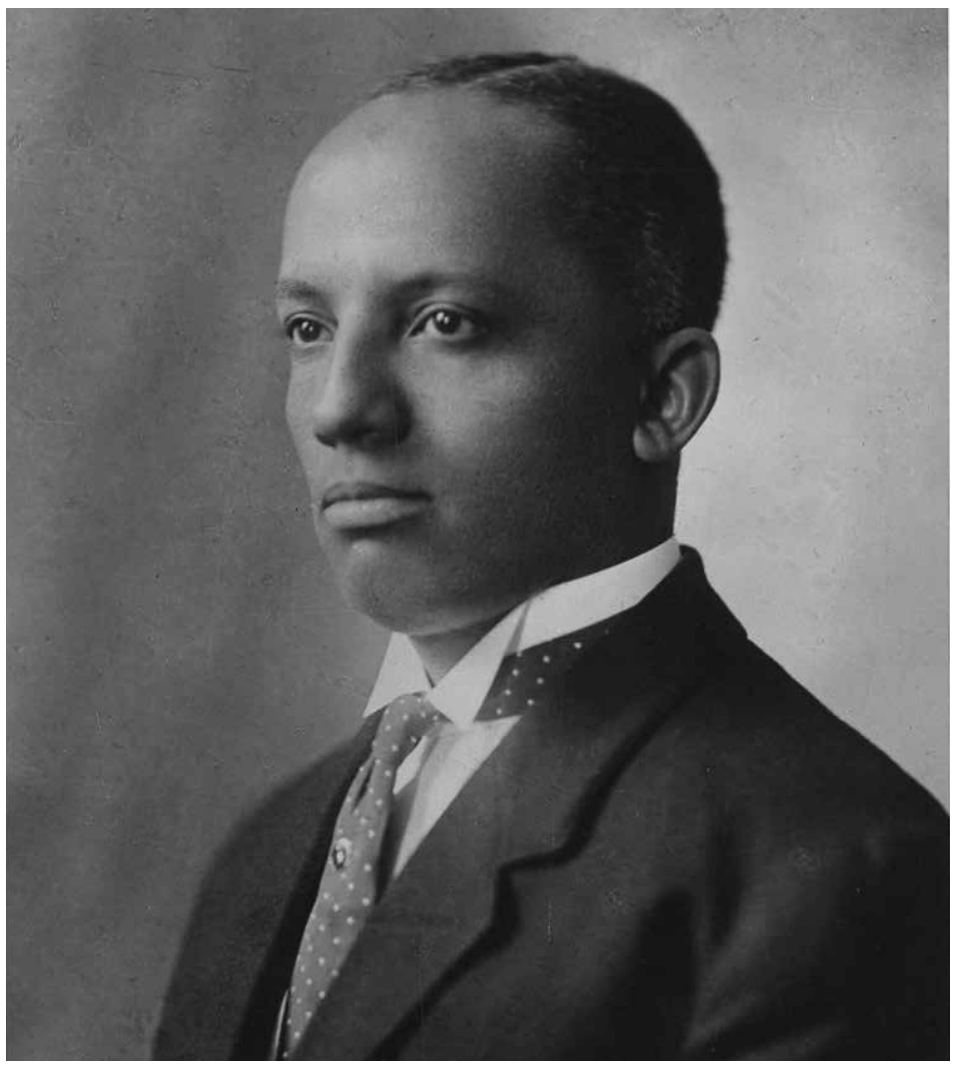
Historian Carter G. Woodson and the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH) created Black History Month in 1925, and first celebrated in 1926. It was originally a week-long celebration, honoring both Abraham Lincoln's birthday on February 12th, and Fredrick Douglass' birthday on February 14th.

The celebration became a month-long observance in 1970 when black educators and black students of Kent State University first proposed the idea in 1969. Six years later, President Gerald Ford officially recognized Black History Month at the United States Bicentennial celebration. "...Seize the opportunity to honor the too-often neglected accomplishments of Black Americans in every area of endeavor throughout our history..." he said, becoming the first president to issue an official recognition. Then in 1986, Congress passed Public Law 99-244 designating February as Black History Month.

Since 1928, ASALH has presented a theme every year to honor specific areas and communities within the Black community. This year's theme is A Century of Black History Commemorations, honoring the past 100 years and the efforts behind the ever-expanding historical and cultural movement.

"If you can control a man's thinking you do not have to worry about his actions. When you determine what a man shall think you do not have to concern yourself about what he will do."

-Carter G. Woodson



Pictured is Dr. Carter G. Woodson, 1915. Portrait by Scurlock Studio, Washington, D.C.

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FRIENDLY

REMINDER

Community Events can be located on the **Beaver Island Community Center** website

biccenter.org/calendar/

BIC Center

A RECIPE FOR ISLAND 'SECRET SAUCE': BASKETBALL, COMMUNITY AND ROLLING WITH IT

By Emily Small

This story was originally published by Door County Knock, an independent, nonprofit news organization covering Door County, Wisconsin. For more information, visit doorcountyknock.org.

Four schools from four islands–Beaver, Mackinac, South Bass and Washington--compete in the Great Lakes Island Basketball Tournament.

I expected Beaver Island to feel familiar. I live on an island too, after all. But from the minute the nine-passenger propeller plane got within sight of "America's Emerald Isle"–a reference to its Irish heritage–on Dec. 12, it was clear that was not going to be the case.

Looking down at the island's inland lakes and semi-frozen shoreline, I suddenly had a lot of questions: Do they have a clinic? A vet? One school or two? What animals live here? Is everyone related? Does everyone know everyone else? Is my phone going to work?

And the big one: what do they do in the winter?

These are exactly the questions people ask me about living on Washington Island and the questions islanders repeat to one another with an affectionate eye roll.

Beaver Island is the biggest island in Lake Michigan, as well as being farthest from the mainland. Instead of a 30-minute ferry crossing, Beaver Islanders have to take a 2-hour ferry trip or a 15-minute charter flight. If wanting to travel in January, February or March, a flight is the only option, as the ferries stop running for three months.

Main Street, Beaver Island, December 13. Photo by Emily Small.

I was with 36 other Washington Islanders, headed to the Great Lakes Islands Basketball Tournament. In our group were the Bucks boys and girls basketball teams, coaches, parents, siblings and Washington Island's volunteer sports photographer, Jim Rose, and his wife, Ann.

Getting off an island can be complicated, but traveling from island to island is on a whole different level. Planes, buses, and automobiles … and ferries.

We left on the first boat to Northport on Thursday, and took personal vehicles to Sturgeon Bay, where we boarded a charter bus to drive six hours north "around the horn" of Upper Michigan to Charlevoix. We then spent the night in a hotel and flew to Beaver Island in the morning on five separate 15-minute flights. It took us over 24 hours to get from one island to the other.

TOURNAMENT DETAILS

The Great Lakes Islands Basketball tournament was the brainchild of Wil Cwikiel, Beaver Island Community School principal, and Steve Poe, retired principal for Put-In-Bay School on South Bass Island in Lake Erie.

In 2017, the first Great Lakes Islands Alliance summit was held on Beaver Island and that's where the two started thinking about how they could extend the reach of GLIA to include island youth, according to Wil.

Four islands participate in the tournament: Beaver, Mackinac, South Bass and Washington Island. The first tournament was held in 2018 on Beaver Island. Every island except Washington Island has hosted the tournament at least twice.

(Washington Island does not have a suitable gym facility, though a fundraising effort to build a new gym is nearing completion.)

Washington Island and Beaver Island boys basketball teams face each other on the court during the 6th annual Great Lakes Islands Basketball Tournament. Photo by Emily Small.

Teams play each other round-robin style over the course of two days. One of the unique things about small island athletic programs is that there will often be sixth graders playing on the same team as high school seniors, for the simple fact of needing players on the court.

Wil recalled the year they mixed up teams from different islands. A 4-foot-and-some-change Beaver Island middle schooler was on the same team as a 6-foot-4 Washington Island senior, he said.

"This huge dude from Washington Island, instead of taking the easy layup, set him up for shots," he said. "He still remembers that."

It is moments of camaraderie and sportsmanship like these that define the tournament, according to Wil and everyone else I talked to.

FRIDAY

Games started shortly after we arrived on Beaver Island. The Washington Island Bucks boys lost to Put-In-Bay in a hard-fought game. They came back to win the game against Mackinac Island, and the girls' team mirrored their results with a loss for the first game and a win for the second.

After the games, all the teams and coaches headed to the Beaver Island Community Center for lasagna and group games and activities. My own son told me it was an amazing time and one of the best nights he has ever had.

One student professed they would be practicing their backbends all year to win the limbo contest next December. It is goofy stuff like this that makes the tournament an "exclamation point," as Wil put it, in the kids' memories.

The fans had their own fun on Friday night. Washington Islanders hit the small downtown for dinner and went to the only tavern open later than 8 p.m. We met some other islanders and swapped stories.

There was a lot of laughter, there may have been some dancing, and it reminded me there is nothing quite like an island bar in winter. Right down to the disaffected bartender, a woman who fled the city for island solitude during a mid-twenties life crisis. Now this felt like home.

ISLANDS UNITE

Folks involved in GLIA like to say how islands across three states and two countries–some member islands are in Canada–have more in common with each other than with mainland counterparts. Sharing experiences and information related specifically to island life are the impetus behind GLIA's formation eight years ago, according to Matt Preisser.

Matt is the GLIA coordinator, and both a mainlander and state government official. He works for the Water Resources Division at the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy. He does the "busywork" for GLIA, he said, like facilitating meetings and communicating with members.

The organization is "a group of people that come together of their own accord to learn from each other and are passionate about where they live," he said.

Thirteen Great Lakes islands sent representatives to the first summit on Beaver Island in 2017. In 2025, the alliance listed 20 member islands. The organization meets once a month via Zoom and a different island hosts a summit every year.

Even though the islands are all unique in culture and character, Matt said, they have a lot in common. Teacher retention, mainland governments that do not understand or appreciate their island communities, seasonal economies and populations, isolation and "less sexy" things like waste disposal are all issues island communities have in common, Matt said.

When I was covering Washington Island town issues, I would often reach out to other islands to learn what they are doing to create solutions for the same problems in their communities. Little did I know I was doing the same work GLIA tries to do. The alliance's focus is on information and resource-sharing, Matt said.

A big shift for all islands happened during the Covid pandemic. Properties that had been for sale for years were suddenly bought up, sight unseen, from people in cities looking to escape. Real estate skyrocketed, and suddenly islands felt more pressure on housing, infrastructure and their way of life.

Environmental issues like invasive species and how to protect the beautiful and unspoiled natural areas of these places is another issue that is "rearing its head more often now," Matt said. Most of the islands have tourism-based, seasonal economies and need to find ways to fund public infrastructure and services with increasing pressure from visitors, he said.

Islands are not alone in this. I see you nodding your head, mainland Door County.

MAROONED

Saturday morning dawned on Beaver Island with a few clouds, bright sunshine and temperatures hovering around a balmy minus 7 degrees with the wind chill. We watched our boys and girls teams play against the Beaver Island teams (the boys won, girls lost) and everyone gathered in the school lobby with our luggage to take shuttles to the airport for home.

We spent all morning and most of the afternoon in that lobby, waiting for visibility to clear on the mainland side so Island Airways flights could take off. It was not to be. Even though skies were clear on Beaver Island, back in Charlevoix, due to lake effect precipitation, visibility was down to one mile. They need three to fly.

Once we all knew we would be staying another night, the Beaver Island community rallied. Someone sent us a schedule of movies at the community center, and vehicles were proffered to get to the one grocery store in town. Motel proprietors gave us back our room keys, and in some cases offered discounts on the extra night. The Wild Strawberry Cafe agreed to open on Sunday morning for those that were stuck.

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Angela Lefevre-Welke, who goes by "Angel," is president and owner of Island Airways. She's also the school board president and the chair of GLIA's steering committee. One thing islanders have in common is they wear a lot of hats, she said.

Another thing they have in common is they "roll with it" when transportation issues arise, she added. Especially when it comes to weather.

The Beaver Island Community School lobby looks like an airport lounge as Washington Islanders wait for flight news. Photo by Emily Small.

"When we had to announce we weren't flying, there wasn't a harsh word (among the island tournament attendees)," Angel told me, a contrast to summertime, when canceled or weather-delayed flights often lead to "a lot of flack" from visitors.

Sunday morning dawned clear, with high hopes for getting home. Worst case scenario, we told each other, we would stay another night and take the ferry on Monday. As we gathered our things to check out, we got the text: "Everything is on pause!!!!"

Visibility was bad again on the Charlevoix side. A rumor spread that waves were predicted to be too high for the ferry to run the next day.

I started imagining a Beaver Island Christmas.

We gathered at the Wild Strawberry, commiserating, eating breakfast burritos, drinking coffee and taking turns holding the cafe owners' baby. Washington Island has a "cafe baby" too, whom regulars cuddle and coo at while his parents sling beverages and baked goods.

Ultimately, we were able to leave on Sunday, during a several hour break in the weather. I was a little disappointed. I missed out on going for a "boodle" with Angel. That's what Beaver Islanders call driving around the island with friends, telling stories and checking out local sites.

Washington Islanders call it "scooping the loop," or if you are of a certain generation, taking a "garbage can tour."

LONG RIDE HOME

Flights landed safely and the charter bus was boarded. Our little group of islanders was tired and ready for home. And, unfortunately, a few people were starting to feel ill.

We listened to the Packer game over the bus's speakers. We scrolled on our phones. Some of the younger kids draped blankets over seats and made a fort. We kept our senses of humor and optimism intact, and it felt like we were all in it together.

The six-hour drive to Sturgeon Bay felt much longer, but it gave me a chance to reflect on the whole adventure.

Island communities are tight-knit by necessity, and traveling with this group felt a lot like traveling with family. We accommodated and helped, and sometimes only tolerated each other, much like you do with family members.

Ironically, it was the mainlander from Michigan who said it best:

"I've lived in multiple places on the mainland, but the passion island communities have from within is unique. Not to say they're always in agreement, but people that live on islands love their communities more than I've experienced elsewhere. There's some kind of secret sauce that keeps them going," Matt told me when I asked him what he most enjoys about working for GLIA.

I think greater Door County has a little bit of that secret sauce too. The peninsular geography keeps the communities tight-knit, self-reliant and resourceful. When there is a crisis, people step up in a big way.

Life on Beaver Island shares a lot with life on Washington Island. They have a clinic, a vet, a school, and wildlife wandering freely—just about everything you would find in Lower Michigan, except fox, skunk, porcupine, opossum, badger, martin, and wolves. Neighbors know each other, even if they are not all related, and they hunker down in winter and rely on each other when they need help.

Beaver Island

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FESTIVITIES

The games will take place on Saturday, March 14th

Join Beaver Island in its traditions by spending the weekend playing fun-filled community games and celebrating St. Patrick's Day with the community that does it best!

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STAYING CONNECTED THIS FEBRUARY AT THE BEAVER ISLAND COMMUNITY CENTER

February on Beaver Island has its own quiet beauty. The pace slows, familiar routines become anchors, and simple comforts. At the Beaver Island Community Center, February brings exactly that: steady rhythms of movement, art, music, and shared time.

TIME FOR ART | WEDNESDAYS AT 5 P.M.

Time for Art participants will complete the Mardi Gras mask-making project they started in January. On February 4, the class will mix paste, dip paper, and cover their mask forms inside and out with papier-mâché. On February 11, the real transformation begins: painting and embellishing with beads, feathers, glitter, and other decorative touches.

Additional Time for Art classes will continue throughout the month, with details to be announced soon. Updates will be posted on the Community Calendar and the BIC Center Facebook page.

LET'S GET QUIZZICAL! TRIVIA NIGHTS | FEBRUARY 10 AND 24 AT 6 P.M.

Whether you arrive with a full team or join one on the spot, trivia nights offer a low-pressure way to connect, compete, and share a few laughs.

Teams of up to six can play for free, but you're encouraged to register ahead of time at store.biccenter.org—only one team member needs to sign up.

VALENTINE'S DAY FAMILY CRAFT

To celebrate Valentine's Day, the Center will host a family-friendly craft on February 14. Details are still being finalized, but families are encouraged to keep an eye on the Community Calendar and Facebook page for the official announcement.

OPEN MIC & KARAOKE NIGHT | FEBRUARY 20 AT 6 PM

Once a month, the BIC Center stage belongs to the community. Hosted by Herb Ledbetter, Open Mic & Karaoke Nights welcome seasoned musicians, first-time performers, and enthusiastic karaoke singers alike.

WEEKLY PROGRAMS THAT KEEP US MOVING AND CONNECTED

- Pickleball – Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays at 10:00 a.m.
- Arthritis Foundation Chair Strength Training – Tuesdays and Fridays at 10:30 a.m.
- BI Senior Advisory Committee Bingo – Wednesdays at 1:00 p.m.
- Senior & Veterans Coffee and Donuts – Fridays from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. These sweet mornings are free to veterans and seniors (60+) thanks to the generosity of Apex Insurance.

SATURDAY MOVIES AT THE CENTER | SATURDAYS AT 3 P.M. AND 6 P.M.

Saturday movies continue throughout February, offering a thoughtful mix of family-friendly films, powerful documentaries, and reflective dramas.

The Center is also continuing its participation in the Beaver Island District Library's long-running "Big Read," with themed screenings that explore survival and resilience as part of the island-wide reading program.

Saturday Movies at the BIC Center are made possible through community donations, and we're deeply grateful for the generosity that helps keep the screen glowing.

A WARM PLACE TO BE, EVEN IN WINTER

In the quiet months, it's easy to retreat into our homes, our routines, and our own small circles. The Community Center offers a reason to step out, try something new, recognize familiar faces across the room, and belong to something larger—not flashy, not complicated, but deeply meaningful in its steadiness.

For updates, full details, and last-minute changes, visit the Community Calendar at biccenter.org/calendar or follow the Beaver Island Community Center on Facebook.

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THE STORIES BEHIND THE NAMES OF ISLANDERS LOST ON THE GREAT LAKES

By Connie Wojan

The following article is a part of an ongoing series based on Islanders listed on the Great Lakes Memorial.

The last episode of this series left off with the question of what happened to William Gibson's widow, Rose Ann, and her young children after his drowning with partner Edward Gallagher on August 13, 1885. At the time, other women in Rose Ann's predicament remarried quickly, sent older children to live elsewhere, or moved back in with their parents. So which of these painful choices did Rose Ann make? Our only vague clue lies in Helen Collar's cryptic notes: "Rose Ann was the one who was sent away by 'Bowery'."

"Bowery" (aka William J. Gallagher) was Rose Ann's brother-in-law, who married her sister Margaret. The 1880 census records show "Bowery" and Margaret and a two-month-old daughter living with Rose Ann's father and mother, William and Hannah Boyle. We know Rose Ann's parents lived into the 1890s and are buried in Holy Cross Cemetery. While Rose Ann was out of the house by 1880, five of her siblings were still at home. We do not know how many were still living with her parents in 1885. Did her sister's husband pressure her father to avoid the addition of more dependents into what was probably an already overcrowded household? Where was Rose Ann sent? Were her children also "sent away," or taken in by sympathetic relatives or friends? The loss of ninety-nine percent of the 1890 U.S. census data in a 1921 Commerce Department fire leaves a frustrating information gap between 1880 and 1900.

After reaching a dead end trying to trace Rose Ann's whereabouts after William's death, I searched for records of her children's fate. I found that two of her sons, William, born in 1881, and Robert, born in 1883, were counted in most of the censuses from 1900 until their deaths. Happily, both married, and led long, successful lives. Despite losing their father to the waters of Lake Michigan, both took up fishing in early adulthood and remained on Beaver Island into their forties.

Robert went from being a 16-year-old boarder in the home of Anthony Malloy in 1900 to owning his own home and tug in 1920. He married in 1909 and had two sons. Later, he moved away to Grand Rapids, where he lived for 39 years, making his living as a millwright and later a furniture sander. He died at 79 in Nebraska but was buried in Grand Rapids.

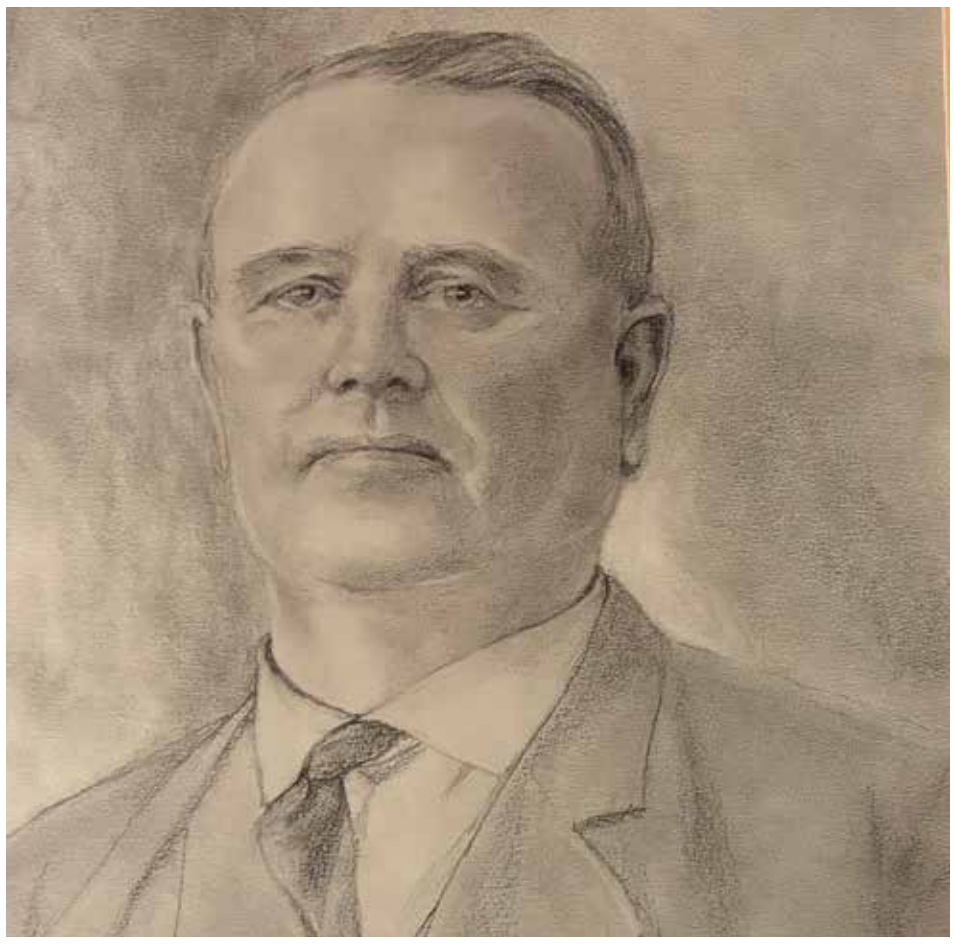
In 1900, at age 18, William was one of three "servants" in the home of Daniel and Bridget Martin. Ten years later, he was married, had two children, and owned his own home free and clear. William moved to 903 Bridge Street in Charlevoix in 1925. There he won the job of "bridge tender," which he held from 1934 to 1951. The 1940 census shows him with an annual income of $1,300 and owning his own home valued at $1,800. He died in Petoskey in 1970, at age 88. William's obituary notes that in his younger years, he was one of the brave winter mail carriers who crossed the dangerously shifting ice between St. James and Cross Village on foot or horse-drawn sleigh.

I also found evidence that William and Rose's daughter Elizabeth, born in 1878, survived and led a long life. She married Clarence Redner in January 1896.

The 1900 census shows Elizabeth (age 22) living in Chicago as a boarder in the home of Alexander Redner (probably Clarence's father). Other entry data correlate with earlier Beaver Island records, indicating Ireland and Canada to be her parents' places of birth. Her age, noted as 32 in 1910, agrees with Beaver Island records. Further proof that Elizabeth survived is the 1918 Gary, Indiana, City Directory, which lists Elizabeth as widow of Clarence. Robert Gibson's 1963 obituary states that a sister, Elizabeth, survived him.

As I was about to finalize this article, I came across a handwritten family record in the Beaver Island Historical Society archives which lists another child of William and Rose Ann Gibson, named "Sadie," followed by a question mark and no birthdate. With little expectation of success, I did an Ancestry.com search for her name. I was surprised when a census record appeared showing a "Sarah Gibson" born September 4, 1885 (about three weeks after the drowning of her father). So now we know that, at the time of her husband's death, Rose Ann not only had several children under the age of six but was also almost nine months pregnant. There is documentation that Rose Ann delivered on Beaver Island, but also that, by at least 1900, Sarah was living with an aunt and uncle in Emmet County, Michigan. Sarah married Owen D. Gallagher in June 1905 on Beaver Island. They had five children. Owen was a steamboat captain whose profession led him and Sarah to live first in Ludington and later in Grand Haven. According to her obituary, she was an active church member and died at 82 in 1967.

Due to the destruction of 1890 census records, we still do not know who raised Rose Ann's new baby and her other young children during the first fifteen years after William's death. The lack of any records showing Rose Ann's residence after the birth of Sarah suggests that she may indeed have been "sent away," as Helen Collar's papers state, and perhaps died prematurely in exile. Yet for the first time in this series, we have a story of hope, resilience, and interesting details about the lives of the children who overcame the terrible blow of being left without parents at the most vulnerable time of their lives.



Pictured is an illustration by Helen Collar of "Bowery", (William J) Gallagher who may have sent widow Rose Ann Gibson away after the drowning of her husband.

LUNAR NEW YEAR
YEAR OF THE FIRE HORSE — TUES, FEB 17
Bold, passionate, and impossible to tame—the Fire Horse blazes its own trail! This year brings daring adventures, fiery confidence, and a little chaos (the fun kind). Gallop into the Lunar New Year with courage and sparks to spare.

CHARLEVOIX COUNTY COMMISSIONERS SYNOPSIS - DECEMBER 10, 2025

Submitted by Kim Garver

The Charlevoix County Board of Commissioners met in the Charlevoix County Commissioners room on December 10, 2025, at 9:30 a.m. Six Commissioners were present.

Motion approved the agenda, as amended.

Motion approved the consent agenda, as presented.

Resolution #25-162, County Expenditures.

Public Hearing on the Michigan Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Funding for Urgent Need 2025 opened for comments from the floor at 9:33 a.m. With no further comments the public hearing closed at 9:34 a.m.

The Board of Commissioner's Organizational meeting was scheduled for January 7, 2026, at 9:00 a.m., with the Building and Grounds meeting to follow immediately after.

Motion approved to reappoint Emily Selph to the Brownfield Redevelopment Board, Joni Hosler to the Fair Board, Matthew Cunningham and Sherman Chamberlain to the Planning Commission, and Mike Castiglione to the Workforce Development Board.

Consensus to send the proposed CCE 911 letter to the other members of the CCE Board and all Cheboygan County and Emmet County Board of Commissioners.

Motion approved the CDBG Generator Grant Agreement.

Commissioner Hankins moved to go into closed session pursuant to MCL 15.268 Section 8(h) at 10:55 a.m., seconded by Commissioner.

The meeting was adjourned to the call of the Chair at 11:18 a.m. Complete copies of the Board minutes can be found on the County website, www.charlevoixcounty.org.

CHARLEVOIX COUNTY COMMISSIONERS SYNOPSIS - JANUARY 7, 2026

Submitted by Kim Garver

The Charlevoix County Board of Commissioners met in the Charlevoix County Commissioners room on January 7, 2026, at 9:00 a.m. Six Commissioners were present.

Motion approved the agenda as presented.

Motion approved to elect Chris Christensen as Vice-Chair.

Motion approved the 2026 meeting schedule as presented.

MEETING SCHEDULE

Audit Committee 2nd Wed. prior to the day Board meeting 8:30 a.m. 4th Wed. prior to the night Board meeting, 5:00 p.m.
Board of Commissioners: Second Wed., monthly, 9:30 a.m. Fourth Wed., monthly 6:00 p.m.
Committee of the Whole: As necessary (no set schedule)
Public Safety/Judicial/Building & Grounds Committee: First Wed., monthly, 9:30 a.m.
Personnel/Internal Government Committee: Third Wed., monthly, 9:30 a.m.

Motion approved the Audit schedule times, dates, and place, as presented. Motion approved Resolution #26-001, Adopt Rules of Procedures.

Motion approved Resolution #26-002, Publications.

The meeting was adjourned to the call of the Chair at 9:26 a.m. Complete copies of the Board minutes can be found on the County website, www.charlevoixcounty.org.

Julia A. Drost, County Clerk

CHARLEVOIX COUNTY COMMISSIONERS SYNOPSIS - DECEMBER 14, 2026

Submitted by Kim Garver

The Charlevoix County Board of Commissioners met in the Charlevoix County Commissioners room on January 14, 2026, at 9:30 a.m. Six Commissioners were present.

Motion approved the agenda as presented.

Motion approved the closed session minutes of December 10, 2025.

Motion approved the consent agenda as presented.

Motion approved Resolution #26-003, County Expenditures.

Motion approved the reappointment of Phil Kessler to the Sanitary Code Board of Appeals.

Motion approved Resolution #26-004, Accept Donation of Money or Property to Charlevoix County.

Motion approved Resolution #26-005, Medical Examiner Facility Use Agreement.

Motion approved Resolution #26-006, Whiting Park Beach Rules.

Motion approved Resolution #26-007, Network Storage Device Purchase.

Motion approved Resolution #26-008, Beckett & Raeder Professional Services Agreement.

Motion approved Resolution #26-009, Maner Costerisan Engagement Services.

Motion approved Resolution #26-010, Notice of Public Hearing.
The meeting was adjourned to the call of the Chair at 10:35 a.m. Complete copies of the Board minutes can be found on the County website, www.charlevoixcounty.org.

Julia A. Drost, County Clerk

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